

Page 2

U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a drywall knife, said drywall knife comprising:
a handle having an elongated inner core comprising a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, a front end, a rear end and first and second opposite surfaces extending from the rear end to the front end of the inner core along the longitudinal axis thereof; and

a blade securely mounted to the front end of the inner core;

the improvement wherein:

the inner core of the handle comprises at least one recess rows of recesses extending along the first surface of the inner core, each of said recesses having an opening facing said first surface so as to reduce the overall weight of the drywall knife, said recesses further defining a set of intersecting ribs shaped, positioned and sized so as to ensure rigidity of the handle while maintaining said reduced overall weight of the drywall knife, and

said inner core further comprises a lid hingedly mounted to the first surface of the inner core, said lid being positioned and sized to be folded about an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the inner core so as to cover said at least one recess rows of recesses, the inner core with the lid in folded position being covered with a covering material so as to facilitate hand gripping of the drywall knife.

2. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 1, wherein the front end of the inner core is provided with a slit extending along the transversal axis of the inner core, said slit comprising two shoulders extending

Page 3

U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

parallel to the longitudinal axis of the inner core and defining an insertion slot into which the blade of the drywall knife is securely inserted.

3. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 2, wherein the blade of the drywall knife consists of a thin plate having an edge provided with a fishbone comprising toothed edges, said fishbone being devised to be inserted into the insertion slot at the front end of the inner core so that when the fishbone is inserted into said slot, the toothed edges grip into the shoulders and prevent the blade from being removed from the inner core of the drywall knife.

4. (cancelled)

5. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 1, wherein the front end of the inner core is slanted onto the blade in such a manner that a user of the drywall knife can rest his or her hand onto the front end of said inner core and onto said blade in a substantially flat manner.

6. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 1, wherein the inner core comprises a first finger support portion adjacent the front end of the handle on one of said first and second opposite surfaces of the inner core for supporting at least one extended finger of a user's hand holding the drywall knife.

7. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 6, wherein the inner core comprises a second finger support portion adjacent the front end of the handle on the other one of said first and second opposite surfaces for supporting at least one other extended finger of the user's hand.

8. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 7, wherein the inner core with the lid in folded position is covered with a covering material

Page 4

U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

so as to facilitate hand gripping of the drywall knife, said inner core being covered with said covering material in such a manner that each finger support portion is left uncovered

9. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 8, wherein each finger support portion respectively comprises two finger-shaped recessed cavities, each finger support portion being used for alternatively supporting the user's index and middle fingers respectively.

10. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 8, wherein said at least one finger and said at least one other finger are respectively the user's thumb and index fingers.

11. (Currently Amended) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 8, wherein the second surface of the inner core of the handle is provided with a protuberance comprising an outer surface having at least one groove in the shape of a sign, said second surface further comprising at least one channel leading within the inner core to said at least one groove, when said protuberance is placed on said second surface of said inner core such that when the inner core is covered with the covering material, the outer surface of said protuberance is not covered by the covering material and thus remains visible and said at least one channel and said at least one groove of the second surface of the inner core are both filled up with the covering material to produce said at least one sign on said outer surface of said protuberance of said second surface.

12. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 11, wherein the sign on the protuberance of the second surface is selected from the group consisting of names, words, numbers, logos, trademarks and symbols conveying information.

Page 5
U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

13. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 12, wherein the inner core is made of polypropylene and the covering material is made of santoprene, and wherein the inner core has a colour different from that of the covering material so that the sign produced forms a visual contrast with the protuberance of the second surface of the inner core.

14. (Currently Amended) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one recess~~ rows of recesses comprises ~~comprise~~ two rows each having seven recesses, each row extending along the longitudinal axis of the inner core.

15. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 3, wherein the edge of the blade whose fishbone is inserted into the insertion slot of the front end is provided with an extruded reinforcement.

16. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 15, wherein the blade is made of steel and the extruded reinforcement is made of aluminium.

17. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 4, wherein the lid is provided with a protuberance having an outer surface, said outer surface not being covered by the covering material.

18. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 8, wherein the rear end of the inner core comprises a hole extending through the inner core from the first surface to the second surface thereof, said hole not being covered by the covering material.

19. (original) An ergonomic drywall knife according to claim 1, wherein

Page 6

U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

the front end of the inner core is transversely wider than the rear end.

20. (currently amended) In a drywall knife comprising:

a handle having an elongated inner core comprising a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, a front end, a rear end and first and second opposite surfaces extending from the rear end to the front end of the inner core along the longitudinal axis thereof; and

a blade securely mounted to the front end of the inner core;

the improvement wherein:

the inner core of the handle comprises at least one recess-rows of recesses extending along the first surface of the inner core, each of said recesses having an opening facing said first surface so as to reduce the overall weight of the drywall knife, said recesses further defining a set of intersecting ribs shaped, positioned and sized so as to ensure rigidity of the handle while maintaining said reduced overall weight of the drywall knife,

said inner core further comprises a lid hingedly mounted to the first surface of the inner core, said lid being positioned and sized to be folded about an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the inner core so as to cover said [at least one recess] rows of recesses, the inner core with the lid in folded position being covered with a covering material so as to facilitate hand gripping of the drywall knife;

the front end of the inner core is slanted onto the blade in such a manner that a user of the drywall knife can rest his or her hand onto the front end of said inner core and onto said blade in a substantially flat manner;

the inner core comprises a first finger support portion adjacent the front end of the handle on one of said first and second opposite surfaces of the inner core for supporting at least one extended finger of a user's hand holding the drywall knife;

the inner core comprises a second finger support portion adjacent the front end of the handle on the other one of said first and second opposite

Page 7

U.S. patent application No. 09/776,729

surfaces for supporting at least one other extended finger of the user's hand, each finger support portion respectively comprising two finger-shaped recessed cavities;

the inner core with the lid in folded position is covered with a covering material so as to facilitate hand gripping of the drywall knife, said inner core being covered with said covering material in such a manner that each finger support portion is left uncovered; and

the front end of the inner core is transversely wider than the rear end.